

CASE STUDY #7

PRIVATE MEDIUM-SIZED
INSTITUTION

ANNUAL RECRUITMENT
BUDGET: \$90,000

AUTHORS

Christian Alyea

The institution is a small private university situated in central Texas with an overall enrollment of approximately 1,500 students. The institution has an international student body that makes up 5% of the overall student body.

The institution is passionate about internationalization and would like to strategically position itself to grow international recruitment and retention. A dedicated sizable budget and charge will launch their efforts. Located in central Texas, the institution is focused on active recruitment in Central and South America, with virtual and online strategies for the rest of the world.



With a recruitment budget of \$90,000, active in-country recruitment will be key in the success for the small private university. Meeting students and their parents where they are will be essential in their strategy. The institution will prioritize partner “fly in” programs allowing partners to visit and experience the institution, implement selected geographical recruitment in Latin America and utilize digital marketing and advertising. Due to the fact that the institution is a smaller university, they need to establish awareness of their institution and create name recognition abroad. Additionally, the institution will provide tuition discounting for the international students to increase competitiveness in the higher ed market.

Executing the following five strategies will help tell the best story for the small private institution, keep students and families engaged and help the institution achieve their goals of successfully recruiting more international students.

BUDGET SUMMARY

Recruitment Initiative	Projected Cost	Projected Activity	Additional Comments	Anticipated Outcomes (KPIs)
Active in-country recruitment	\$45,000	Target market development, prospect and application generation	Target markets will be noted as emerging, sustaining, or growing to inform KPI expectations.	Applicants, admits, and enrolled students. New partnership opportunities for articulation agreements, research collaboration, and exchange/study abroad.
Digital Marketing / Social Media Strategies	\$15,000	Ad placements, social media content, geofencing	Leverage digital marketing, geofencing, and IP Address targeting options.	New leads in target markets, and completion of enrollment tasks.
Domestic International Student Recruitment	\$15,000	Transfer Articulation Agreements, ED fairs w/community colleges, CC campus visits	Multiple fairs per term, including summer	Student applications. New linkages with potential partners.
Partner "Fly In" Campus Visits	\$15,000	Welcome stakeholders to campus, showcase facilities to counselors, agents, dignitaries.	Increase in applications Increase in enrolled students	Lead generation Increase in applications and enrollments Brand awareness
Tuition Discounting	TBD	Award grants for merit, need, or for travel.	Funding may be sporadic.	Improve class yield and class profile.

RATIONALES

Active Incountry Recruitment

Fall Recruitment

- a. 10K (Mexico*)
- i. 20K (Brazil*, Colombia*, Venezuela*)

*Destinations selected based on number of students in the US - source IIE Open Doors

b. Spring Recruitment

- 1. 10K (Mexico*)
- 2. 20K (Brazil*, Colombia*, Venezuela*)

The small private university has decided to strategically focus active recruitment travel on destinations in Latin America. The destinations were selected based on the high volume of students from these countries who are already studying abroad in the United States. The lower cost of on-ground expenses during active recruitment allows the small private university to get better value for their money, visit more locations, and visit the locations more regularly, establishing awareness and a deeper trust with the institutions they're visiting.

While on-ground, the small private university will participate in Educational fairs, local high school visits, and distribute plenty of printed marketing materials to the schools and families they visit with.

The small private university is also taking into consideration the additional bonuses of recruiting from Latin America. From the perspective of the students and their families, flights to and from Latin America to central Texas tend to be more affordable in comparison to students coming from Europe, Asia or Africa, providing an additional added value to students and families further lowering the overall cost of the student's academic journey. Additionally, by focusing on locations in the western hemisphere, time differences are a minimal factor allowing for easier communication back home.

Lastly, due to the large Hispanic population in central Texas students from Latin America can have a sense of familiarity making the transition into their new home a bit easier.

Digital Marketing / Social Media Strategies

Meet students and families where they are (tiktok, instagram, facebook, google ads)

Short 60-90 second videos

Highlight current students

Run campaigns, contests and provide university swag as giveaways

The institution is actively engaging in digital marketing and social media strategies in the destinations where they're coordinating active recruitment. They're coordinating bilingual ad placements on both social media and google that correlate with their institution's legacy, vision and value. Through their social media ads they're able to target the location and age groups that they see as potential clients. They diversify their approach by using facebook to target parents and instagram to target students. Their ads are catchy, short with a clear call to action. Additionally, during the periods of active recruitment they use geofencing to target specific locations within the cities they'll be visiting to build brand awareness prior to engaging with the prospective students at the educational fairs and highschool visits. Increasing the likelihood of students visiting the fairs and attending the presentations recognizing the institution's name.

To generate content, the institution is strategizing with their global office, marketing department and digital marketing students to design class projects and internship opportunities allowing the students to gain real-world experience focused around digital marketing.

The strategy emphasizes user-generated content directly from international students to be used on platforms most commonly used by Generation Z primarily tiktok, instagram and facebook. The students create short video clips of their day-to-day activities to be used in stories, as well as longer 30-90 second video clips with testimonials and a deeper look of their academic and student life. The program allows for a continual flow of user generated content that the institution can effectively use in social media campaigns. Additionally, the institution creates branded swag and giveaways for prospective students who engage with the social media campaigns.

Domestic International Student Recruitment

Transfer Articulation Agreements

Educational fairs community colleges

Community College Visits

International highschool visits and affiliations with highschool student exchange organizations, Rotary International, etc.

The institution strategizes to arrange articulation agreements with community colleges throughout Texas ensuring that international students who begin their academic journey at a community college in Texas can easily transfer to their institution. They use the established relationship with these institutions to participate in educational fairs and organize community college visits to directly engage with the international students at these colleges. Looking beyond community colleges, the institution also networks with international highschools throughout Texas to establish brand recognition early in the student's journey encouraging highschool juniors and seniors to begin their college journey as freshmen at their institution.

Additionally, the institution networks with local Rotary International Clubs and other student exchange organizations to introduce their institution to exchange students that may want to continue their time abroad and continue with their university studies.

Partner "Fly In" Campus Visits

The institution relies heavily on coordinating partner fly-in programs from the countries where they engage in active recruitment, in addition to countries where they're not engaging in active recruitment. The arranged visits allow the institution to invite potential partners to their institution while they're already visiting the states. The institution uses the following organizations to explore potential client networks: AIRF, NAFSA, AIEA, ICEF, NACAC / IACAC. These impactful visits build a sense of trust with the influential visitors, allowing the small private university the opportunity to provide the visitors with hands-on experience at their institution. The visitors are able to experience the campus culture, visit the facilities, engage with faculty, administrators and students who are living the experience. The fly-in programs are instrumental in deepening the relationship with the partners, ensuring they're confident to refer students to the institution in the future.

Tuition Discounting

By providing international students discounted tuition, the small private university is able to increase their competitiveness and entice international students with a discounted rate. This incentive is essential with the increase of competition and options for international students to study elsewhere. Even with the lower tuition rate, a higher number of enrolled international students can offset the discounted tuition rates and provide additional revenue to the institution in addition to assisting in diversifying the institution.

RECOMMENDATIONS

With the budget of \$90,000 the small private institution can effectively continue their efforts of increasing international student recruitment and retention beyond the current 5%. By focusing on active recruitment in strategic locations that allow the institution to get the most out of their budget, while simultaneously providing additional benefits to the future international students with cost savings on airfare, similar time zones and local communities with similarities in both language and culture they're able to attract more prospective students.

Strategically using geofencing, ad placement and social media, allows the institution to target their specific markets where they're engaging in active recruitment continuing to strengthen their brand awareness. Additionally, they're able to work with their current international students to create user generated content for authentic social media posts and stories.

Engaging in domestic international student recruitment allows the institution an affordable solution to connect with prospective students who are already in Texas reducing travel costs for active recruitment and providing students awareness of an attractive university to transfer to, or begin their academic journey.

Partner fly-in programs are key in their strategy. The institution is able to establish brand recognition and trust with their partners, motivating the partners to continue to refer students to the institution.

Lastly, by providing tuition discounting the institution is able to stay competitive in the saturated marketplace and make students and families feel they're receiving a special offer from the institution.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

With sincere gratitude to the generous sponsorship of the following organizations, Gateway was able to offer the Spring 2022 Gateway Leadership Institute and produce these case studies focused on international enrollment management. These inspiring organizations are truly committed to preparing the next generation of international education leaders.

